1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

mon convenience. Usually the several jacales are entirely separate; but at Punta Tormenta, Punta Narragansett, and still more notably at Bada Ballena, individual huts were found either extended to double length or joined obliquely in such wise as to show two fronts (as illustrated in plate VI). The conventional frameworks appear to be common tribal property, at least to the extent that an abandoned skeleton may be preempted by any comer; while the addition of walls and roof appears to afford a prescriptive proprietary right to the elderwoman and family by whom the work is done—though the right seems to hold only during occupancy, or until the temporary covering is dislodged.

The jacales are without semblance of furnishing, beyond an occasional ahat and a few loose pebbles used as hupfs; though the nooks behind the bows and tie-sticks sometimes serve as places of concealment for paint-cups, awls, hair bobbins, and other domestic trifles. There is no floor but earth, and this remains in natural condition, except for trampling and wearing into wallows, recalling those of fowls and swine, which afford a rough measure of the periods of occupancy; there is no fireplace—indeed, fires are rarely made in the jacales, nor for that matter frequently anywhere; and there are no fixed places for bedding, water ollas, or other portable possessions, none of which are left behind when the householders are abroad.

Little is known of the actual process of jacal building, especially in Seriland proper; but the observations of Señor Encinas and his vaqueros on the frontier corroborate Mashém's statements that the houses are built by (and belong to) the matrons; that several women customarily cooperate in the collection of the okatilla and erection of the framework; that the only tools used in the processes are hupfs and miscellaneous sticks; and that the placing and fitting of the beams and tie-sticks are accompanied by a chant, usually led by the eldest matron of the group. The same informants support the ready inference from the structure that the shrubbery and other material forming walls and roofs are gathered and placed from time to time by the women occupying the jacales.

The Seri building chant is suggestive. Neither Señor Encinas nor Mashém regarded it as religious or even ritualistic, but merely as a work-song designed (in the naive notion of the latter) to make the task lighter; and it seems probable that the local interpretation is correct. If so, the simple chant at once offers rational explanation for its own existence, and opens the way to explanation of the elaborate building rituals of more advanced tribes. The work-song is a common device in many lowly activities, ranging from those of children at play to those of sailors at the windlass, and undoubtedly serves a useful purpose in guiding, coordinating, and concentrating effort; to some extent the vocal accompaniment to the manual or bodily action apparently expresses that normal interrelation of functions manifested by second-

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

562 592 order, the matron's eldest brother coming first, the younger brothers next, and finally the husband, who squats in, or outside of, the open end of the bower. According to Mashém's iterated explanations, which were corroborated by several elderwomen (notably the clanmother [423] known to the Mexicans as Juana María) and verified by observation of the family movements, the house and its contents belong exclusively to the matron, though her brothers are entitled to places within it whenever they wish; while the husband has neither title nor fixed place, "because he belongs to another house"—though, as a matter of fact, he is frequently at or in the hut of his spouse, where he normally occupies the outermost place in the group and acts as a sort of outer guard or sentinel. Conformably to their proprietary position, the matrons have chief, if not sole, voice in extending and removing the rancheria; and such questions as that of the placement of a new jacal are discussed animatedly among them and finally decided by the dictum of the eldest in the group. The importance of the function thus exercised by the women has long been noted at Costa Rica and other points on the Seri frontier, for the rancherías are located and the initial jacal erected commonly by a solitary matron, sometimes by two or three aged dames; around this nucleus other matrons and their children gather in the course of a day or two; while it is usually three or four days, and sometimes a week, before the brothers and husbands skulk singly or in small bands into the new rancheria.

Quite similar is the regimentation of the family groups as indicated by the correlative privileges and duties as to placement, as well as the reciprocal rights of command and the requirements of obedience. Ordinarily (especially when the men are not about) the elderwoman of the jacal exercises unlimited privileges as to placement of both persons and property, locating the ahat, the bedding, the fire (if any), and other possessions at will, and assigning positions to the members of her family, the nubile girls receiving especial attention; she is also the arbiter of disputes, the distributor of food, etc; but in case of tumult, especially when children from other jacales are present, she may invoke the author- [614] ity of the clanmother, whose powers in the rancheria are analogous to those of the younger matrons in their own jacales. Even when the men are present they take little part in the regulation of personal conduct, but tacitly accept the decision of matron or clanmother; yet in emergencies any of the women are ready to appeal for aid in the execution of their will to a brother (preferably the elder brother) of the family, or, if need be great, to the brothers of the clanmother. So far as was observed, and so far as could be ascertained through informants, these appeals are always for executive and never for legislative or judicative cooperation; but various general facts indicate that in times of stress—in the heat of the chase, in the warpath-craze, etc—the men bestir themselves into the initiative, while the women drop into an 562 inferior legislative place. As an illustration of the ordination in some-

7: Marroquin E-5 (1955) 1957 NU3, Seri NU31

POPULATION ABLE TO WORK
(between 11 and 65 years)

Men, 74 or 69% of the masculine population. 464
Women, 76 or 70% of the feminine population. 162
462

We can add that, at least as far as the male population is concerned, the figure of 69% with a potential work capacity is equivalent, in general terms, to the percentage of the population economically active, since one of the singular characteristics of the Seri population is the fact that they constitute a community fully occupied: all the men of working age have a place set aside in the fishing activities; this is an advantageous position for increasing economic development of the tribe. With relation to the women the situation is not the same, since the majority of girls of marriageable age carry on very few productive activities; it could be said that economic responsibility begins with matrimony. [226]

If it is true that all the Seri men are fishermen, it is also true that there is the beginning of some specialization of jobs, which are carried on complementing or as an accessory to the principal occupation. Thus we have among the men: 463 462 162

Carpenters, constructors of *piraguas* (a kind of canoe)	6
Medicine men	14
Farmers	2

And among the women:

Seamstresses	4
Farmers	1
Midwives	22

The relatively high number of medicine men and midwives should not be surprising; Seri popular medicine is very well known and depends principally on magical propitiation and since the magic powers are acquired in a variety of ways, including dreams, and the healing rites are, on the other hand, very simple, it is not strange that medicine men should abound. As for the midwives, it can be said that every woman who has undergone the experience of childbirth feels herself able to help at a birth; nevertheless, it is said that the more experienced women are those best able to take care of those giving birth. 755 756 844

Problems which should be attended to

In addition to the sanitary problem mentioned above, mention should also be made of the problem of agriculture, linked with the necessity for supplying food to an Indian population which since economically it depends principally on fishing, needs to complement its diet with agricultural products to achieve a better one. In close relation 185 [262] [241] [423]

7: Marroquin E-5 (1955) 1957 NU31 Seri NU31

with this problem is the lack of legal title to the lands which the Seris own in fact but which legally belong to the nation.

Insofar as the economic problem, it is necessary to better the fishing techniques, doing away with old process of obtaining the catch through dynamite explosions. Finally, as Dr. Marroquin says, the fact should be noted that the Seris on passing from the nomadic economy to exchange economy lack the necessary knowledge to achieve success in their operations within the national and international market.

It is thus necessary to take care of these and other problems, to save this Indian group from complete extinction, succeeding on the other hand in raising their living conditions, making of them citizens capable of contributing to the progress of the State of Sonora and the Republic of Mexico as a whole.

NEW DIRECTOR OF THE SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS IN MEXICO

For the next two years the Director of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Mexico will be Dr. Benjamin Elson. Dr. Elson first came to Mexico in 1942 and began linguistic field work among the Sierra Popoluca Indians of the State of Veracruz. Sierra Popoluca has been the principal object of his linguistic studies since that time, and various articles have resulted from these researches. He took his degree from Cornell University with the thesis "Sierra Popoluca Morphology". He has on other occasions served as Associate Director of the Institute in Mexico.

The Associate Director will be Mr. H. J. Klassen. Mr. Klassen has done linguistic field work on Lowland Mixteco in the State of Oaxaca. He has served as Interim Director of the Institute on previous occasions.

VII ROUND TABLE OF ANTHROPOLOGY HELD IN THE CITY OF OAXACA FROM SEPTEMBER 1ST. TO 7TH.

During the month of September, the VII Round Table of Anthropology, dedicated to the study of the Indian cultures of Oaxaca, was held in the city of Oaxaca, capital of the state of the same name. Since at the present time there exists in this state a large proportion of Indians, and since during its pre-Hispanic past such important cultures as the Zapotec and Mixtec flourished there, the interest of this Round Table is evident.

Lack of space makes it impossible to present here a complete report of this anthropological meeting; therefore, we will limit our coverage to a summary of the most important points, taken from the Report of the recording secretary, Prof. Wigberto Jiménez Moreno. This report was made available to us through the kindness of Mrs. Carmen Cook de Leonard, Vice-President of the Center of Anthropological Investigations of Mexico. The complete version in English may be seen in the *Boletín* of the Center of Anthropological Investigations (Nº 4, Oct., 1957, pp. 43-49).

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the vessel to Guaymas. With the aid of a group of Yaqui, some of these women were said to have been permitted to go to Hermosillo and eventually to return to their home on Tiburon. Others of their group are said to have remained near Guaymas. The women who returned to Tiburon reported that the San Esteban women and children were put aboard another ship which sailed southward.

BANDS I, III, AND IV

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As opposition from the Papago and government forces increased, the members of Band I were forced to seek refuge on Tiburon Island. The mainland members of Band III (subdivisions 11 and 12) were also forced, especially during the Encinas Wars, to flee to Tiburon. There the combined forces of Bands I, III, and IV sought to cope with the military expeditions sent out through the years to exterminate them. Tiburon Island is an adverse battlefield for the uninitiated; some expeditions were turned back due to lack of potable water or because of failure to make contact with the enemy in the mountainous terrain. Some expeditions did encounter the Seri, however, and many natives were either killed or captured.

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Through the years, then, these military encounters, along with smallpox and measles epidemics, were responsible for reducing the Seri tribe to a small remnant. The band and clan systems lost their functional relevance as the people continued to live together for mutual protection. Shortly after the turn of the century, the expeditions and raids had practically ceased.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF BANDS TODAY

With the dissolution of the band system, the rule of descent shifted from patrilineal to bilateral, and the rule of residence shifted from patrilocal to neolocal.

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Although the substance of the band system is no longer a reality, the concept of land ownership still remains. A young Seri of today may choose to be associated with either the i?iziiting of his father or that of his mother. He is said to inherit part ownership of the area. It is recalled by one informant that in former times ownership of a mountain was especially important. Sometimes ownership of a mountain was included as part payment for a bride. Thus a person might 'own' a mountain in a subdivision other than his own.

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A custom exists even today whereby a person names his dog after a mountain or other geographical point located in his subdivision. Although the person may re-use the name, each dog so named must be of the same sex as the first.